

# the Adventist Woman



Margarete Prange, delegate from the Euro-Africa Division, pastors churches in Germany. Also in the small-group discussion are Johannes Mager (left), ministerial director in Euro-Africa and (right) Mario Veloso, secretary of the South American Division.



Nancy Bassham, from the church ministries department in the Far Eastern Division, samples the box lunch served on Friday during the commission meetings.



Arthur Ferch, field secretary of the South Pacific Union, makes a point to Kit Watts, assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*, during the small-group discussions on Thursday afternoon. Each group included about 12 of the commission delegates.

**Next discussion set for July 1989**

## GC commission puts women's ordination on hold again

The 80-member Commission on the Role of Women in the Church met March 24-27 at General Conference headquarters in Washington, D.C., and concluded that still more study is needed before they can vote for or against ordaining women to gospel ministry. They are the third group to come to this conclusion in the past 15 years.

The commission will meet again for a full week in July 1989 before rendering a final report to the 1989 Annual Council. Because Annual Council delegates determine the General Conference session agenda, it is uncertain whether the issue will go to the 1990 GC in Indianapolis.

Representatives of large segments of the world church indicated they would vote against ordaining women as ministers if the issue were pressed now. Neal C. Wilson, General Conference president and chairman of the commission, said that in a private session with the division presidents on Saturday night, March 26, eight out of the ten urged that the church maintain its present position (nonordination).

**Dorcas Society wins souls**

## AAW helps fund evangelism in Kenya

AAW President Nancy Marter recently presented a \$1,000 check to Mrs. Eunice Wangai to help fund the outstanding evangelistic outreach of women in Kenya.

Mrs. Wangai, who has galvanized the Dorcas Society in Eastern Africa as "Adventist Women in Action," spoke about her work to the Metro Chapter on March 28 in a meeting on the Columbia Union College campus in Takoma Park, Maryland. She was one of four delegates from the Eastern African Division to attend the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church, which met in Washington, D.C., March 24-27.

"We are getting women out of the kitchen and into the harvest field for souls," Wangai said fervently. She reported that "between December 8, 1987, and January 2, 1988, women from three districts went out for one week each and harvested a total of 822 souls for the kingdom."

Successful as the women's evangelism is, the church has yet to allot funds to support it.

Overseas members made up about 40 percent of the commission. General Conference personnel, along with theologians and resource persons appointed by the GC officers, accounted for 33 percent of the group. Women comprised 20 percent of the members.

### Synthesis, consensus needed

Throughout the intense four-day discussion a number of commission members made proposals to resolve the present dilemma. Three needs that surfaced several times and ultimately gained general approval were:

#### ■ The need for synthesis.

Walter Scragg, president, and Arthur Ferch, field secretary of the South Pacific Division, suggested on Sunday that "synthesis papers" be prepared to bring the whole topic of women's ordination into focus. Ferch reminded the group that "as Adventists we arrived at our understanding of the Sabbath and other key doctrines not only by looking at individual texts but by considering them in

the light of the whole Scripture."

#### ■ The need for theological consensus.

Several individuals urged that writers of future study papers meet together "head to head" to thrash out their theological differences before the commission meets next year.

As it was, 23 new papers came to commission members just as the authors had written them, without being critiqued or reviewed by a representative group, and with presuppositions and hermeneutical methodologies sometimes in serious conflict.

#### ■ The need for an encompassing view of all ministries in which women participate.

The commission agreed that in order to fulfill the mandate given them by the 1985 GC session they must not only address the ordination question, but also find ways to enhance all women's ministries. Wilson reminded the commission that Ellen White had been clear and forceful when she asked the church to support women in Bible work and pastoral team ministry with their husbands, and to give them just wages in these en-



Eunice Wangai receives a \$1,000 gift toward the women's evangelism projects in Kenya from AAW president Nancy Marter.

shelter for the destitute. For a long time we have tried to keep this program going on in the midst of opposition by some of our men-folk, but we have refused to give up! When the Lord is on our side, who can be against us? We shall never give up!" Wangai declared.

deavors. "We've hardly touched these points," he emphasized.

### The main event

The commission, including AAW President Nancy Marter and four men invited at the last minute to attend as observers, met for a total of 30 hours. The intensive four-day session began Thursday morning at 8:30, March 24, and wound up about 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, even as many delegates were leaving to catch their planes.

Speeches were the main event of this meeting even as they had been at the 1985 commission.

In addition to the chairman's comments

**See GC COMMISSION pg. 3**

## Wanted: a few good women

Which of the Adventist women you know should be nominated for Women of the Year awards in 1988? The awards ceremony will be held in conjunction with the AAW Conference, September 2-5, in Portland, Oregon.

"These nominations help AAW meet one of its major goals—to encourage and recognize Adventist women who are using their gifts to help others in their church, community, or society," says Peggy Harris, who coordinates the annual event. The deadline is July 15.

In addition to awards in the three usual categories (Home/Community Life, Work/Professional Life, Church Life), Harris has announced that a new award will be initiated this year. It will go to a woman who has made outstanding contributions in any categories during 1987.

Nomination forms are not difficult to fill out, Harris says. But she adds that time may be needed to gather the three letters of reference that must accompany the nomination. These should be testimonials from others who know the nominee well; her local pastor or elder must be one of them.

For full information write to: Peggy Harris, Women of the Year, Association of Adventist Women, P.O. Box 3884, Langley Park, MD 20787.



# My impression of the commission

by Nancy Marter

First of all, a special Thank you to the many Adventist women who have recently written to our church leaders expressing your concern about women's participation in church life. If we expect to have a voice in our future, we must bestir ourselves and show leaders that women are a committed, capable segment of the body, not to be taken casually.

### Surprise invitation

Two days before the Commission on the Role of Women began, I received a call from Elder Neal Wilson inviting me to attend the meeting as an observer. I did. It was not what I would describe as an enjoyable experience, but it was certainly educational! You will be reading a report about the meeting and its outcome elsewhere in this issue, but I want to make three observations here.

### I. Do church leaders consider women's issues important?

The discussions surrounding the position of Adventist women in their church are not new. They have been taking place on and off over the past 100 years, though more persistently over the past 15.

It is hard to remain patient. I want to take what I'm told at face value, assured that my personhood and contribution to church life is valued. I'd like to believe that enlarging roles in the church for women like you and me is considered an important issue, to be handled with the same seriousness given to saving one soul. I want to believe that real effort and imagination will be turned toward bringing women into the mainstream of church participation, and that money will be designated for that purpose. I want to believe. . .

### II. The rightful place of sensitive accommodation

The reality of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a world church became abundantly clear at this meeting. This is largely a positive situation. For the most part we seem capable of accommodating with grace our widely varying cultural concepts.

For example, we do not insist on uniformity in Sabbath observance world wide even though the Sabbath is included as one of our fundamental beliefs. Adventists around the world exhibit considerable differences in what is considered acceptable dress or adornment. These practices

Twelve senior pastors of college churches in the North American Division signed the following statement and directed it to the commission members meeting in Washington, D.C., March 24-27, 1988.

#### A Statement to the Commission on the Ordination of Women

As pastors of North American Division college churches, we, the undersigned, motivated by concerns pastoral, moral, and theological, share with you our convictions regarding the ordination of women.

We believe it is neither right nor expedient for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to continue denying anyone full participation in ministry simply on the basis of gender. We beseech you to open the door of ordination to the women in our midst.

God expects, we believe, that this should happen. The Bible has been used against the idea, but it has also been used against mercy, against emancipation, against the equality of peoples. When we read it aright, however, as the story of a journey to deeper understanding, we will humbly acknowledge its highest truth: that in Christ our servanthood is mutual, no person higher than another because of race or class or gender.

The Bible story takes us to Jesus, the grand ideal. We learn of many advances in understanding and many retreats, but most important of all we learn that the authority of Jesus, the Son of God, is final (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:1-3).

We must, then, consider the following with due respect: that against the bias of his age Jesus welcomed women into the circle of discipleship (Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 10:38-42); that in his inaugural sermon he proclaimed the Gospel of deliverance from oppression (Luke 4:18); that in the name of servanthood he rebuked the spirit of superiority and domination (Matt. 20:20-28).

This is the basis for the Pauline vision of the family of God, a family where the distinctions of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female dissolve into the magnificent unity of the new life in Christ. We call upon you to help Seventh-day Adventists embrace this vision fully. We ask you to acknowledge that arguments against doing so are based upon assumptions about the Bible that might easily be used in the defense of violence and of slavery and of racism.

As it is not right to withhold ordination from women, it is not expedient. Thoughtful Adventists, especially those of the second and third generation, are losing patience with our hesitation to follow Jesus. They are disappointed and out of their disappointment they are leaving us, taking their intelligence, commitment and support with them.

Among remaining church members, moreover, the prospect of further discord and further discouragement looms over us. We should never impose female ordained ministers on any congregation or any territory of the church. But wherever our people wish to accept the full leadership of women in ministry, we must, not only in faithfulness to Christ but also in determination to renew our church's vigor, allow them to do so.

As pastors of college churches we listen to members, including many students, who eventually scatter throughout our denomination. We are acquainted with their hopes and feelings; we know they are crucial to the church's future. Please consider this as you reflect on what we say.

Our prayers are with you, and our deepest hopes and fullest gratitude.

Peter Bath  
Kettering SDA Church  
Kettering, Ohio

Robert Bretsch  
College View SDA Church  
Lincoln, Neb.

Charles Scriven  
Sligo SDA Church  
Takoma Park, Md.

Darold Bigger  
Walla Walla College Church  
College Place, Wash.

Lyell Heise  
La Sierra Campus Church  
Riverside, Calif.

Dennis Uffidell  
Kingsway College Church  
Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

Roger H. Bothwell  
Pacific Union College  
Angwin, Calif.

Terry Pooler  
Atlantic Union College Church  
South Lancaster, Mass.

David Vandenberg  
Loma Linda Hill SDA Church  
Loma Linda, Calif.

Gordon Bietz  
Collegedale SDA Church  
Collegedale, Tenn.

LaVeme Schlehober  
College Heights SDA Church  
Alberta, Canada

Louis Venden  
Loma Linda Campus Church  
Loma Linda, Calif.

do not shatter our unity. The essentials are claimed by all of us, including our belief that Jesus Christ is our Saviour and that He has promised to return for us. Jesus unites us.

Regarding women's roles, an insistence on a lock-step progression—all of us moving together or *not moving at all*—will, I feel, prove destructive. I would like to see the church accommodate, as it has with other practices, to the moving of the Spirit and surrounding social conditions.

### III. Women have the very gifts the church needs

Adventist women everywhere have important contributions to make. The balancing influence of our gifts is greatly needed. Consider the crisis the church is facing in several world divisions where high levels of apostasy are due, often, to the lack of nurture and disciplining—the very gifts women pastors and leaders often contribute. Consider the crisis arising from insensitive personal relationships. Consider the crisis of substance abuse. As women more widely participate in leadership and ministry we will help the church address these situations positively.

God has given us each gifts to use. Not for self-seeking personal gain but for the human family whose face He wears. He wisely did not gift us all the same, because He saw each contribution fitting snugly with the next, like a giant jigsaw puzzle.

I believe women undermine His plan when we refuse to acknowledge the gifts or calling of another woman because her gift differs from our own. Yes, women will continue to be child-bearers and to a large extent, primary care providers. But children *do* grow up. And many women never marry, or if they do may not have children.

### Glaring inconsistency

We are repeatedly admonished to glorify God by using the capacities placed within us. Fine women are held up to us as role models—women who have gained advanced degrees in psychology, education, medicine, law, or whatever. But we must recognize the inconsistency that immediately follows. The advanced, specialized training women take as pastors and chaplains is not encouraged, recognized, or authenticated. I ask, have these women not also glorified God by developing their gifts?

AAW promotes a unity that develops wholeness. To be whole the church must meet the crying needs for teachers, Bible workers, women's deans, mothers, children's Sabbath school division leaders, church elders, health educators, chaplains, early childhood educators, writers, artists, inspirational event organizers, pastors, educational superintendents, bedside nurses. You name it. Each is needed; each compliments the whole. Adventists must be a *whole* people intent on sharing the wonder and love of Christ to a distressed and dying world.

Let us be done with divisive tactics among ourselves. It is my prayer that Adventist women will move together in affirmation and support for each of our sisters and the ultimate triumph of God's work.

### Letters

#### South Pacific greetings

Dear Editor:

Your December 1987 issue reporting on the fifth AAW Conference was a thrill to read. Unable to attend and thousands of miles away though I am, the various writers conveyed to me something of the joy and celebration of the occasion. Perhaps one year it will be possible for some of us who live in the South Pacific Division to be present.

Jan Clark  
Auckland, New Zealand

#### Bacchiocchi again?

Dear Editor:

I am disappointed that AAW allowed Bacchiocchi to blackmail it into taking up that large portion of our women's paper (March 1988). He had nothing new or enlightening to say.

I want to hear about what women are doing, not about Bacchiocchi's worship of maleness.

Martha Nelson  
Loma Linda, California

#### Power and intimacy

Dear Editor:

I appreciated Juanita Mayer's small article on power and intimacy ("From the Pulpit," March 1988).

As a clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of people who have been abused and neglected, I very much appreciate Ms. Mayer's honest and forthright approach. I hope that everyone takes her words seriously and works on this issue in a clear and profound way. Family violence, child abuse, and child neglect hurt all of us and create enduring problems for society. Please keep up the good work.

Jeanne Fleming, Ph.D  
Longview, Washington

#### Disturbing at best

Dear Editor:

Your report (March 1988) of the Question and Answer period with GC President Neal C. Wilson was disturbing, at best.

If indeed our church decides to ordain—or not ordain women—on a basis other than Scripture or the writings of Ellen G. White, then obviously it is high time to get on with it! The argument that the "world" cannot accept women in leadership positions simply does not wash—there are too many women leaders around the world to consider the "acceptance" issue valid.

But an even more disturbing part of the report was the president's comments regarding a woman's "call" to the ministry. Does Elder Wilson believe that the validity of a call by God is dependent on a church committee to ratify? Are we to believe that we can know that no woman has been called to the ministry because no woman has yet been ordained to the ministry?

And now a question of my own. How can I explain to my daughters that the ministry of Ellen White is valid, but that of a woman minister at the college church is not? In fact, in a church that consistently states that women *cannot* be called by God to situations where they lead men spiritually, how can I defend Ellen White at all?

Please answer quickly; my girls are growing fast.

Rosemary Watts  
Richland, Washington

#### Good luck, Mrs. Johnsson

Dear Editor:

I was happy to read that Noelene Johnsson has been put in charge of the children's programs. I pray that she has some success with getting help for us in the lower divisions.

I really fear that she will have the same problem on the General Conference level that we have on the local level. There are no Cradle Roll or Kindergarten baptisms so why spend money on "entertaining" the children? I speak from years of working in the children's divisions and trying to convince pastors, conference leaders, and church boards that those children are precious souls and if you get them at that age they make a lot better members than ones coming in when they are adults.

The Church Ministries Department has spelled the end to all conference support of the children's divisions. We didn't have a lot of support before, but now they don't even pretend to care what happens to us. Those of us who have invested years and thousands of dollars in Sabbath school materials and programs want to learn, but the conference fails to give us help or support. I think the big problem is because the divisions are usually run by women and not men so they are not considered "important" jobs. If the men ever decided they wanted to run the lower divisions, they would probably say it was men's work and women wouldn't be allowed to serve!

Delores J. Adams  
Gentry, Arkansas

# GC commission faces hazards, opportunities in next

Continued from front page

and the testimonies of seven women on Sabbath afternoon, commission members heard about 27 major speeches. The longest were logged by Steven Wallace and V. Norskov Olsen, who spoke for more than 45 minutes each on Sunday. Delegates characterized the intensive four days as exhausting. As one observed, "There were no unimpassioned speeches. Everyone who spoke had a lot of conviction."

Speeches were almost evenly divided between those who supported women's ordination and those who opposed it. A few chose not to disclose their personal views.\*\*\*

## Six questions

Friday morning the chairman outlined six areas on which he felt the commission should concentrate, namely:

■ Is ordaining women, or withholding ordination from them, a moral issue? Is it right to compare the women's issue with the 19th-century slavery issue?

■ What are the nature of the "call to ministry" and the work of the Holy Spirit in it?

■ In what ways is ecclesiology and the authority of the church involved in this issue?

■ How are biblical authority and hermeneutics involved in this issue? Is religion shaping society or vice versa? Was Paul using rabbinic logic? Were his statements culturally conditioned or are they normative?

■ How shall the commission arrive at a decision? How shall we communicate with the world church?

■ How shall we deal with the current status of the licensed minister? (In the North American Division males in this category are permitted to baptize; females are asked not to.)

## The commission at work

**Thursday.** Working from careful notes on a pad of yellow paper, Wilson opened the commission by giving an hour to reviewing the history of the women's ordination question among Seventh-day Adventists since 1973. The first group to study the issue, an *ad hoc* committee, met at Camp Mohaven in Ohio and prepared recommendations relating to women as deaconesses, elders, and pastors, for the 1973 Annual Council.\* The second group met in Washington, D.C., in 1985.

Following this, Benjamin Reaves, president of Oakwood College, gave the opening devotional at 10 a.m. focusing on the attitudes of Joseph's brothers toward him. Afterward, division presidents introduced their delegates.

## Small groups

The chairman next conducted an opinion poll of the commission. It consisted of 17 questions on theology and policy. Just before lunch the entire group was divided into six small groups, chaired by GC vice presidents. These met most of the afternoon to discuss any issues the members felt were pertinent. No assignments were given and no reports were made. The groups seemed to function as an ice-breaker.

Before the commission adjourned Thursday, Wilson revealed the outcome of the poll—and asked that no one publish the results. In general, the poll showed that those for and against women's ordination were well represented in the group. It was also clear that while some individuals were urging the church to rescind as a "mistake" its earlier decision to ordain women as elders, the commission was not buying this view.

A surprise close to the meeting came when Wilson distributed a statement personally signed by 12 senior pastors of college churches in North America. The statement (see page 2) urged the commission to welcome women into ministry with full authority.

## Friday.

Emilienne Rasamoely, delegate from the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, stirred the commission with her devotional, although she said beforehand that it would be the first



Delores Robinson, pastor of the Arden Hills Church in California, described her work for the commission in the Sabbath afternoon session.



Eva Nora Rios de Monroy, who has done lay pastor work in Mexico, shared her convictions with the help of Joseph Espinosa who translated for her.

time she had preached in English. She touched on such familiar Adventist themes as Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, the significance of the investigative judgment, and righteousness by faith.

Between 10 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. about 13 commission members made major speeches, with a brief time-out for a box lunch at noon.

Again ending on a surprise note, Wilson distributed preliminary results of doctoral research done by Arlene Taylor of Angwin, California. Taylor had surveyed a total of 600 randomly selected Adventist women to discover what they considered to be the top five women's issues today. The final results were:

1. The need for equal compensation, recognition, and advancement
2. Fatigue and stress from "superwoman" expectations
3. Educational and career opportunities for women
4. Changing standards: jewelry, dress, etc.
5. Economic pressures to work outside of the home.

Wilson added that the ordination of women came out as the eighth priority.

**Sabbath.** During a four-hour Sabbath afternoon session Wilson fulfilled his promise to AAW to give three women pastors and chaplains a chance to share their personal testimonies. Four women who strongly oppose ordination also spoke.\*\*

The session was dramatic. Meeting in the GC cafeteria on the 10th floor of the North Building with its sweeping view of the city, the commission witnessed the seven powerful women speakers at the same time as a spectacular electrical storm filled the sky with thunder and lightning.

**Sunday.** Dr. Kenneth Vine got an appreciative chuckle from the commission when he said he'd been asked to give a devotional that *did not* deal with ordination. He delighted the group with a creative interpretation of Revelation 12:16 ("and the earth opened her mouth . . ."), which he related to the work of archaeologists defending the church.

Afterward, another 14 individuals spoke, and more were waiting. Wilson finally drew the session to a close, revealing the stance of the world division leaders, recommending further study, and calling for another meeting next year. The commission readily agreed. Columbia Union Conference President Ron Wisbey spoke for many, however, when he pointed out that the coming year will be fraught both with hazards and opportunities.

## Hazards and opportunities

**Hazards.** AAW believes delay has its hazards. Among them:

1. As long as women's ordination remains unresolved, strong feelings can fester. Among those who champion one view or another are irresponsible individuals whose feelings and actions often overtake their sense of fair play.

2. The myth of obtaining "balance" in the discussion and of dealing with "serious division in the church" is allowed to persist. Actually, church members, leaders, and theologians are not as divided as some think.

For example, in North America, 83 percent of the theologians support women's

ordination; 63 percent of pastors support women in pastoral roles; 46 percent support their ordination compared with 41 percent who do not. (See *Adventist Review*, June 4, 1987, pp. 17-19.)

**Overseas,** 57 percent of religion teachers in our Adventist schools believe that women who have demonstrated their calling to the ministry should be ordained. (See *Ministry*, August 1987, pp. 14-18.)

3. The movement to give women a "special" ordination is promoted as a compromise measure. The underlying belief is the familiar "separate but equal" or "equal but different" viewpoint, which permits discriminatory attitudes and actions toward women to continue.

4. Everyone's patience is strained. In the case of the trained, qualified women pastors and chaplains whose lives, careers, and futures are at stake, the pain is extended once again. Some casualties are bound to occur.

**Opportunities.** AAW concurs that delay also offers important opportunities:

1. **Better studies.** Papers developed for the 1985 and 1988 commissions focused largely on problem texts and problem areas. Church leadership now has the opportunity to correct this approach and seek synthesis in 1989.

2. **Theological consensus.** Those who wrote study papers for 1985 and 1988 had no opportunity to dialogue among themselves. This step could be built into the 1989 process.

3. **Women's involvement.** Among all of the 1985 and 1988 papers only one was prepared by a woman. On a subject that deals so particularly with women's concerns this proportion is unacceptable. Leaders could now involve a number of competent women scholars in the church and on the commission in writing and critiquing the next studies.

4. **Broader awareness and endorsement.** Bible workers, pastor's wives, teachers, nurses—and other groups where women form the backbone of the work force—have

experienced insensitive and sometimes unfair treatment. Employment, job security, professional development, a voice in decision-making, and appropriate remuneration are issues that the commission should address and improve.

5. **Finding flexibility.** As Nancy Marter comments in her Presidential Communique elsewhere in this issue, the "lock-step" mentality that obligates the church to move together everywhere at once, or to move nowhere at all, is impractical, even destructive. Commission members have the opportunity this year to consider a more realistic, flexible approach, which in the long run will promote rather than destroy unity.

\*Four individuals who attended the Camp Mohaven council have also been members of the 1985 and 1988 Commissions on the Role of Women: Charles Bradford, Dr. Raoul Dederen, Dr. Gerhard Hasel, and Kit Watts.

\*\*The seven women Elder Wilson invited to share their personal testimonies and views with the commission on Sabbath from 3-7 p.m., March 26, are listed in the order in which they spoke:

Delores Robinson, pastor of the Arden Hills Church in the Southeastern California Conference. (Favors)

Dr. Penny Shell, director of pastoral care for Thorek Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. (Favors)

Eva Nora Rios de Monroy, a lay pastor from Monterrey, Mexico. (Favors)

Rosalie Haffner Lee, long-time Bible worker and pastor's wife from LaGrange, Illinois. (Opposes)

Dr. Mercedes Dyer, formerly chairperson of the Department of Education, Andrews University, now retired in Berrien Springs, Michigan. (Opposes)

Dr. Loretta Johns, chairperson of the Business Education Department, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. (Opposes)

Dr. Laurice Durrant, chairperson of the Nursing Department, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska. (Opposes)

\*\*\*A tally of the major speeches made to the commission shows personal opinion on ordination as follows (some individuals spoke more than once):

**Opposed**  
George W. Brown  
Shirley Burton  
Laurel Damsteegt  
Bekele Heye  
Raymond Holmes

Miraslov Kis  
Rolf Kvinge  
V.N. Olsen  
Steven Wallace  
Eunice Wangai  
Ted Wilson

**Favored**  
Gordon Bietz  
C.E. Bradford  
Joseph Espinosa  
Marsha Frost

William G. Johnsson  
Patricia Mutch  
Louis Venden  
Ron Wisbey  
Kit Watts

**Undisclosed**  
Arthur Ferch  
Robert Olson

Jan Paulsen  
Walter Scragg  
Neal C. Wilson

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Copy deadline for the next issue of *The Adventist Woman* is July 21.

Mail copy at least 5 days in advance of the deadline. The editor schedules the Friday and Sunday afterward to put material together.

Send to Beverly K. Habada, Editor, *The Adventist Woman*, Box 3884, Langley Park, MD 20787.

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The Town Meeting for women in the Columbia Union benefits the Office of Human Relations' Women's Commission. They are (left to right, seated): Thesba Johnston, chairperson, Lake Union; Karen Scott, Canada; Carole Kilcher, OHR/Andrews University; (standing): Dorothy Williams, Columbia Union; Evelyn Glass, Mid-America; Liz Sterndale, NAD Coordinator for Women's Ministries Advisory; Rosa Banks, Southern; Junell Vance, Atlantic; Lourdes Silva, Pacific.



More than 125 women from the Columbia Union streamed into the Town Meeting held at the union office in Columbia, Maryland, on March 20. Representatives came from many churches, with the Allegheny East Conference providing one of the largest delegations. Warren Banfield, director of the Office of Human Relations, is shown here next to Dorothy Williams (right) who organized the meeting.

## Women speak to "listening ear" at Columbia Union town meeting

by Esther Rosado

More than 125 women from the Columbia Union met on Sunday, March 20, for the first Women's Town Meeting in that union, conducted by the North American Division Office of Human Relations (OHR) Women's Commission.

According to Dr. Thesba Johnston, chair of the OHR Women's Commission, the purpose of this ongoing commission is to reach the grass roots. "We want to listen to women in the pew, hear their concerns, questions and needs," she stated. "We feel we can help the church provide a listening ear."

Johnston, who is a member of the School of Education faculty at Andrews University, heads the OHR Commission, which consists of female representatives from each union in North America. Those on this division-level

commission are appointed by their union president.

Dottie Williams, Columbia Union's representative, organized this session, which was held in the Columbia Union office building in Columbia, Maryland.

After worship and general introductions the women divided into groups according to their conferences. Each group discussed needs and the contributions they felt they could make and are making to the Adventist Church.

### Where do they go?

Following this interaction, each group presented their recommendations to the larger group. From here recommendations are funneled to the North American Division and the

General Conference.

Many women wondered, however, how these "channels" would work and how well their recommendations would be heard. "Will our church be more than just a listening ear?" "Will anything be done about what we have said?"

Their concerns ranged from developing career guidance for young women in the church to creating a speaker's bureau for women, and developing a newsletter to spotlight Adventist women's concerns.

Even though it was stated many times that the subject of women's ordination was not the focal point of this meeting, the upcoming meeting of the GC commission on this topic (which met just four days later) was on many minds, and emerged as a major concern in

many of the small-group discussions.

Previous town meetings have been held in the Lake Union, Pacific Union, and Atlantic Union.

### Future town meetings

Upcoming town meetings are scheduled for the Mid-America Union in Lincoln, Nebraska, July 8-10; in the Southern Union at Huntsville, Alabama, October 21-23; and in the Canadian Union in British Columbia sometime in 1989.

Esther F. Ramharacksingh Rosado is Assistant Coordinator, Harvest 90 Education Project, North American Division.

### Moving testimonies

## Newly released audio tape tells "why I feel called to ministry"

"Most Seventh-day Adventists have never met a woman pastor or chaplain," says Nancy Marter, AAW president. "Naturally, when the question of ordaining women comes up, most of them have questions. Why do these women swim against the stream of public opinion? Why do they want to get into work that has traditionally been done by men?"

Responding to these legitimate questions, AAW has produced an audio cassette tape that lets 10 women pastors and chaplains speak for themselves. An accompanying booklet includes a photograph of each woman and a summary of her story.

The 67-minute tape features women from Sweden, Norway, Korea, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the United States.

While statistics are sketchy, AAW believes that at least 150 women throughout the world have gained experience in pastoral-evangelistic work or in chaplaincy. Many more are now in training for these types of ministries. Newbold College, for example, currently has 25 women theology majors, or one-quarter of the class.

Initial copies of the tape and booklet set, entitled "Our Stories," have been sent to the 77 members of the GC Commission on the Role of Women in the Church, which met March 24-27 in Washington, D.C. In addition, another 200 sets have been shared with key church leaders and communicators. But more money is needed to expand the project.

### Oral History

"This is actually an oral history project," Marter noted. "Regardless of how the church ultimately votes on ordination, we now have a permanent record of these women's testimonies as to how the Holy Spirit has convicted them of their calling. That's valuable. That's a witness of God's gifts."

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Funding is needed to underwrite the tape/booklet project so it can be distributed even more widely. A letter stapled in the March issue of the *Adventist Woman* drew generous responses from about eight individuals. Their contributions totalled about \$500. "We really appreciate this support," Marter emphasized. "We hope others will join us and respond by return mail."

### Will you help?

Another \$1,000 would make it possible to send out the tapes and booklets on hand. If an additional \$3,000 came in the project's influence could be doubled.

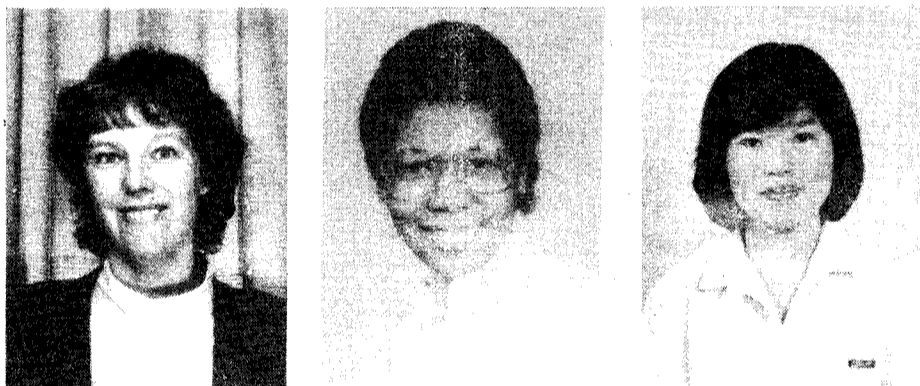
Marter also pointed out the value of each AAW member having a set of "Our Stories" to keep and one to loan or give away. She noted several ways the tapes and booklets could be used to educate others on this topic:

1. **Prayer Groups.** "Sharing the tape will remind us to pray daily that God will sustain our women in ministry at these times. They need our support and encouragement," Marter said.

2. **Sabbath School Programs.** Marter suggested, "Many of our AAW members are active in their local churches and might share the tape and booklet in Sabbath school programs to stimulate an awareness of this issue currently being studied by our church."

3. **Academy and College Bible Classes.** Marter noted that most college and academy students take a denominational history class, and this oral history would be a valuable resource for discussion and research.

4. **AAW Public Programs.** Local AAW chapters could use the tape and booklet as a kick-off for discussion. A panel might respond to the issues raised, or a local woman in ministry might be invited to add her own testimony.



Yvonne Oster, Wanda Grimes Davis, and Esther Noh are three of the women pastors and chaplains who share their experiences in the newly released tape entitled "Adventist Women in Ministry: Our Stories." Oster pastors a church in Sweden. Davis is a chaplain in Memphis, Tennessee, and Esther Noh, from Korea, is completing her MDiv degree. Seven other women share their sense of God's leading on the tape.

### AAW DONATION AND ORDER FORM For "Our Stories" Tapes and Booklets By Adventist Women in Ministry

Yes. I want to help extend the witness of Adventist women in ministry through the AAW tape/booklet project. (Sets are \$8 each which includes postage and handling.)

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ (number) copies of the set at \$8 each \$\_\_\_\_\_

Use my enclosed contribution to share "Our Stories" with key leaders in the church. \$\_\_\_\_\_

Total Check = \$\_\_\_\_\_

(I understand that only the donation part of my check is a tax deductible gift to AAW).

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: AAW—Tape Project  
Send to: AAW—Tape Project, P.O. Box 3884, Langley Park, MD 20787